

CPYRGHT

DEBRAY IS QUOTED ON A C.I.A. EPISODE

Jailed French Leftist Writes
It May Have Saved His Life

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By HENRY RAYMONT

Régis Debray, the 27-year-old Parisian philosopher who is serving a 30-year prison sentence in Bolivia for having participated in the guerrilla movement headed by the late Ernesto Che Guevara, is reported to have written friends that his life may have been saved by the United States Central Intelligence Agency.

The text of the letter, it was disclosed, yesterday, will appear in the February issue of *Evergreen*, an avant-garde monthly literary magazine published by Grove Press. Fred Jordan, the managing editor of the magazine, said that the document was smuggled out of Bolivia by a French journalist and that there was absolutely no doubt about its authenticity.

In the letter, entitled "A Message to My Friends," Mr. Debray said he was at the point of being shot by Bolivian Army officers soon after his capture in the village of Muyupampa in southeastern Bolivia, last April when several Spanish-speaking men, whom he identified as C.I.A. agents, intervened.

"The gentlemen from the C.I.A. called a halt to such shenanigans, summoned a doctor and at first treated me with utmost courtesy," the 27-year-old Marxist ideologist and writer said.

Washington Is Silent

Administration officials in Washington have refused to comment on reports that the C.I.A. and United States anti-guerrilla specialists had assisted the Bolivian Army in the apprehension and questioning of Mr. Debray. Official sources, however, indicated privately that the State Department had made informal efforts through the United States Embassy in La Paz to assure Mr. Debray's safety.

In a letter, Mr. Debray insisted that he had gone to Bolivia as a journalist for the French publisher François Maspero and that he had not borne arms.

But he rejected as "unfortunate" the clemency pleas of his mother, Mrs. Jeanine Alexandre-Debray, a conservative member of the Paris Municipal Council, on the ground that he was "a man of letters." He declared: "I belong in thought, word and deed in an overall revolutionary movement, which is based upon the premise of clandestine struggle."

Time Not Ripe

If he did not become an active combatant, he wrote, it was because "Che decided that the time was not yet ripe for that, not yet, and that for the moment it was better that I serve by keeping the outside

world informed."

Mr. Debray said the alleged C.I.A. agents had "a complete file" on his background as a Marxist theorist who has been close to Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba and whose book "Revolution Within the Revolution" proposes a new strategy of guerrilla warfare in Latin America.

"As for the guerrilla movement itself," he observed, "the agents 'knew practically all there was to know.'"

In the same issue, *Evergreen* will publish an account of Mr. Guevara's death by the French journalist Michel Bosquet, disputing Bolivian assertions that the Argentine-born revolutionary and right-hand man of Premier Castro, had been killed in battle.

The January issue of *Atlas*, a monthly digest of the foreign press, carries a similar report by Franco Pierini of *L'Europeo* of Milan, asserting that Mr. Guevara was shot by a Bolivian officer on Oct. 9, after he had slapped Col. Andres Selnich during an interrogation.

Mr. Pierini said that Colonel Selnich, commander of the tactical unit that destroyed the guerrilla force, confirmed the incident, stating that Mr. Guevara was "a real boor, fanatical as only Argentines and Cubans can be."